

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (**TANF**), formerly known as **AFDC**, is part of The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (**PRWORA**). This program focuses on helping families with dependent children become self-sufficient, while providing financial and/or medical assistance. This program is available from the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) and there are 12 DHHS offices statewide.

If you are eligible for TANF financial assistance, you will be expected to find and keep a job. However, if you are, or have been, in a relationship that is, or was abusive, and this relationship is making it difficult for you to work, there are ways you can get help. DHHS may put aside certain program requirements when they:

- Place you or your children at risk of physical or emotional harm, or
- Make it more difficult for you to protect yourself or your child(ren) from harm or threat of harm, or
- Unfairly penalized you or your children who are or have been victimized by family/domestic violence.

When there are concerns about the conditions above, you could be given an alternative plan of action that would take into account you and your children's safety. Your worker can discuss this with you.

If you request, at any time, an alternative plan of action from certain program requirements due to a claim of family /domestic violence, you will be required to show that you are, or have been, in an abusive relationship.

There are several things you can do to document your claim:

- Get a letter from a social service agency or a domestic violence crisis center in which you are involved.
- Bring any records you may have such as; court, medical, criminal, social services, psychological or police/law enforcement reports.
- Get a letter from a landlord, neighbor or a friend who knows of your situation.
- Sign a sworn statement that says that you are, or were a victim of family/domestic violence and that you need an alternative plan of action for TANF program requirements due to the abuse you and your family suffered.

The Law Protects Your Confidentiality.

Federal, state and DHHS's policies protect your confidentiality. This includes protecting your name and address. If you have concerns about confidentiality, talk to a DHHS worker. It is important to remember that mistakes can happen and there is no 100% guarantee. Always have a safety plan (see the services under local crisis centers).

Please be aware that state law requires us to report suspected child abuse, elder and/or incapacitated adult abuse to the appropriate officials in DHHS.

If you have concerns that a report of suspected child abuse may be made, please be aware that the law requires that children stay at home if they can be safe in their home.

Other Programs And Benefits Available.

If you are not eligible for TANF, you may be eligible for other programs such as food stamps or medical insurance for your children. Please ask about any programs for which you could qualify.

There are many people who can help you. You decide if and when you want to tell any of the following people about your situation.

The DFA Case Technician from the DHHS Division of Family Assistance (**DFA**). The DFA Case Technician helps you apply for financial assistance and maintain your eligibility for financial assistance.

The Child Support Enforcement Officer from the DHHS Division of Child Support Services (DCSS). This person helps you collect child support safely, or helps you get a good cause program waiver if you need one.

Employment Support Counselors (ESC) from the New Hampshire Employment Program (NHEP) - There is a team of NHEP workers assigned to assist you while participating in the TANF work program to reach your goals. One team member is your Employment Support Counselor, but you can talk to anyone on the NHEP team.

Domestic Violence Program Specialist from your local crisis center This person works part time in the DHHS district office and part time in a domestic violence crisis center. This person can tell you all about the services available to help you deal with your situation.

Crisis Center Advocate - This person works for the local crisis center and is specially trained to work with you on your relationship issues and help you with a safety plan. Your crisis center advocate may go with you to your financial assistance appointment, if you want her to. You can call your crisis center and talk confidentially with an advocate at any time, whether you participate in TANF or not.

DV Assessment Counselor-This person will meet with you if you feel it is unsafe for you to participate in the NHEP or you want to receive financial assistance for greater than 60 months due to family/domestic violence. Once you get together and discuss your situation, this counselor will make a determination about your status.

DCYF Social Worker from the DHHS Division for Children, Youth and Families. This person can help you if there are concerns about your child(ren)'s safety.

NH Legal Assistance. There are people available at your local legal assistance office to help you with many of the issues discussed here. They can also help with: tenant and landlord issues, employer issues, and help you understand TANF program requirements.

If you have any questions or need more information about alternative plans of actions, exemptions, waivers, or other programs or services, please speak with your DHHS worker. Or call your local crisis center, or NH Legal Assistance listed in all telephone books in the 'Community Service Numbers' section.

REMEMBER

The most dangerous time for a person is when they are in the process of leaving the relationship. This includes when they are preparing to leave, while they are actually leaving, and right after they are in a new place. Make sure you know how to protect yourself and your children. A crisis center can help you with a safety plan and can even see that you have emergency shelter.

WHEN YOU APPLY FOR TANF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE YOU MUST:

1. Cooperate with the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) by:

- Naming the father, and
- Helping to locate the father.

2. If you are a mandatory participant in the NH Employment Program (NHEP) which is the TANF work program, you will be required to:

- Actively search for full time employment, or
- Participate in a job readiness/job training program

3. End your financial assistance once you have reached your 60 month lifetime limit.

A referral to a local crisis center is available to you regardless of any programs or benefits you may or may not receive.

WHEN YOU APPLY FOR, OR ARE RECEIVING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE YOUR OPTIONS ARE:

1. If cooperation with the DCSS puts you or your family in danger:

- Your whereabouts will be kept confidential, and
- The requirement can be waived.

2. Special considerations in the NHEP if family/domestic violence is, or has been a problem for you at any time while receiving TANF financial assistance:

- You will not have to meet the work requirement until you are ready, and
- You can be referred for crisis center services such as: counseling and support, legal assistance, and even emergency shelter.
- You can get reimbursement for child care and transportation costs while in the NHEP Barrier Resolution activity.

3. If family/domestic violence has been a problem for you at any time while receiving TANF financial assistance, making it difficult or impossible for you to be self-sufficient, you can receive benefits for longer than 60 months.

If you would like more information about family/domestic violence services for yourself or for someone you know, please speak to anyone involved in your case. If you don't understand something, ask and keep asking until you do understand.

SERVICES LOCAL CRISIS CENTERS CAN OFFER YOU.

While each crisis center is different, there are some services that are available at many of them. Ask or call your local crisis center and find out what services are available and out how they can help. Some services you may receive from a crisis center can be:

- **Support groups** - Where you can share with other victims going through some of the same things.
- **Safety Plan** – They will help you work on a plan for you and your family's safety.
- **Legal advocacy** - They will help you learn what relief is available from the court system and police.
- **Social service advocacy** - They will give you referrals to places where you can get help in many ways.
- **24 hour phone line** - You can call anytime you need to, day or night.

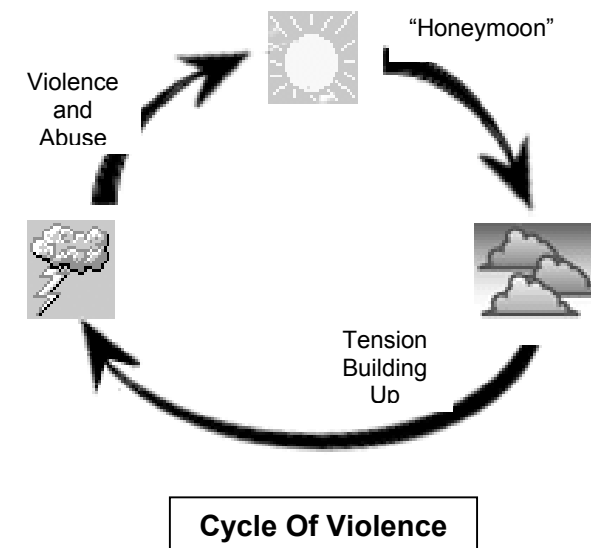
Ask what other services might be available at your local crisis center.

Provided in cooperation with the NH Department of Health & Human Services and the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

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MAYBE THERE IS HELP!

Does this look or feel familiar?



Are you in danger of your partner or ex-partner doing any of the following:

- Physically hurting you by, for example: pushing, grabbing, slapping, hitting, choking, or kicking?
- Forcing you to have sex when you don't want to, or to do sexual things you don't want to do?
- Threatening to hurt you or someone else close to you?
- Constantly putting you down and telling you that you are useless?
- Stalking, checking up on you, or following you?
- Causing you serious mental or emotional pain?
- Threatening to take your child(ren) from you?